

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

GAC-01 AID-20 ACDA-19 MBFR-03 IO-12 /136 R

DRAFTED BY EA/ K: DLRANARD/ DOD: PFLINT: DPW

5/15/73 EXT. 20780

APPROVED BY EA/ K: DLRANARD

DOD/ ISA: RVANDEGRIFT

PM: RAMACCULLUM

DESIRED DISTRIBUTION

SECDEF

----- 072707

R 152312 Z MAY 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

INFO CINCPAC

COMUS KOREA

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E. O. 11652

TAGS: MARR, KS

SUBJ: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

REF: SEOUL 2993 (NOTAL)

1. SECRETARY RICHARDSON, IN OPEN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE ON 8 MAY, RELATED THE FIVE- YEAR MODERNIZATION PLAN TO THE U. S. FORCE PRESENCE IN KOREA. DURING THE TESTIMONY THERE WAS REFERENCE TO THE ENDING WITHIN FIVE YEARS OF GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO KOREA WHICH SENATOR PELL APPEARS TO HAVE ASSUMED ALSO MEANT THE WITHDRAWAL OF U. S. FORCES FROM KOREA WITHIN THAT PERIOD. SECRETARY RICHARDSON RECOGNIZED POSSIBILITY OF REDUCTION IN U. S. MILITARY PRESENCE FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE MODERNIZATION PLAN BUT WAS UNSPECIFIC REGARDING ANY SCHEDULE. HE STRESSED THAT CONSULTATION

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WITH ROK WAS NECESSARY.

2. IN OPENING STATEMENT, SECRETARY RICHARDSON SAID:

" KOREA IS AN IMPORTANT CASE IN POINT. IN 1971 WE BEGAN A MODERNIZATION EFFORT FOR KOREA AIMED AT ENHANCING THE DETERRENT OF ITS OWN FORCES AGAINST AGGRESSION OR PRESSURES FROM THE NORTH. THIS EFFORT, COUPLED WITH OUR EARLIER

SECURITY ASSISTANCE, HAS PERMITTED INCREASING RELIANCE ON SOUTH KOREA'S CAPABILITIES. THUS, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WITHDRAW SOME 20,000 U. S. TROOPS, WHILE SOUTH KOREAN SOLDIERS HAVE ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR FRONT- LINE DEFENSE ACROSS THE ENTIRE PENINSULA. AT THE SAME TIME, SOUTH KOREA HAS MADE GREAT ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND SHOWN INCREASING ENERGY AND CONFIDENCE IN DEALING WITH ITS SECURITY PROBLEMS, INCLUDING WILLINGNESS TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA.

" BUT THE JOB IS NOT YET DONE. WHILE KOREA IS FAR MORE CAPABLE OF DEFENDING ITSELF TODAY THAN IT WAS WHEN THE DECADE BEGAN, WE HAVE NOT YET REACHED THE DAY WHEN NO U. S. FORCES WOULD BE NEEDED IN A CONTINGENCY.

" OUR ALLIES AND FRIENDS ARE INCREASINGLY READY TO ASSUME PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN DEFENSE AND TO COMMIT TO IT A VEAVY SHARE OF THEIR MANPOWER AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES. BUT, FOR SOME OF THEM, FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES ARE LIMITED, AND THEY CANNOT MAKE FULL USE OF THEIR DEFENSE POTENTIAL WITHOUT THE ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE OUR PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE."

" OVER TIME, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR RESOURCES WILL PERMIT THEM TO ASSUME AN INCREASING SHARE OF THEIR OWN DEFENSE COSTS. WE EXPECT THIS TO FURTHER REDUCE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE-- PARTICULARLY GRANT AID-- IN THE YEARS AHEAD. INDEED, THE 25- YEAR HISTORY OF OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DEMONSTRATES PRECISELY THIS TREND. . ."

3. INTERCHANGE WITH SENATOR PELL, WHICH WAS ONLY OTHER UNCLASSIFIED

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PORTION OF TESTIMONY DEALING WITH KOREA, IS REPRODUCED BELOW: " MR. SECRETARY, YOU MENTIONED IN YOUR TESTIMONY THE FACT THAT BY THE END OF FIVE YEARS WE WILL HAVE WITHDRAWN OUR FORCES. I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD ENLARGE ON THAT. DOES IT MEAN THERE IS A MASTER PLAN TO THE EFFECT THAT WE REALLY WILL HAVE WITHDRAWN ALL OF OUR FORCES AT THE END OF FIVE YEARS OR --

" SECRETARY RICHARDSON. IT HAS NOT BEEN WORKED OUT IN THAT DETAIL AT THIS POINT, SENATOR PELL. THERE WOULD NEED TO BE, OF COURSE, CONSIDERABLY MORE CONSULTATION WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA GOVERNMENT THAN THERE HAS BEEN

BUT I THINK IT IS SUFFICIENT TO SAY, PERHAPS ALL I SHOULD SAY, AT THIS POINT, THAT THERE IS A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING THAT ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM IS TO GIVE THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA THE CAPABILITY TO DEFEND ITSELF WITHOUT FURTHER DIRECT PRESENCE OF U. S. GROUND FORCES.

" SENATOR PELL. YOU MENTIONED FIVE YEARS, I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD ENLARGE ON THAT A LITTLE BIT. AT THE END OF FIVE YEARS IS IT THE PROGRAM OR PLAN THERE WILL BE A SHARP REDUCTION?

" SECRETARY RICHARDSON. YES, I AM REFERRING TO THAT. WELL, IT IS NOT CLEAR AT THAT POINT THERE WOULD BE A SHARP REDUCTION AT THE END OF IT OR WHETHER IT WOULD BE PHASED, SO THAT THE REDUCTION WOULD HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED BY THE END OF IT. AT ANY RATE, WE ARE ABOUT HALF WAY INTO THE FIVE YEARS. THE RATE OF SUPPORT FOR THE U. S. MODERNIZATION PROGRAM HAS LAGGED IN PART BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN OPERATING UNDER A CONTINUING RESOLUTION, AND WHETHER THAT WOULD OR SHOULD HAVE ANY EFFECT ON REDUCTION I DO NOT KNOW AT THIS POINT. " IN ANY EVENT, TO REPEAT, IT IS OUR GENERAL INTENTION AND UNDERSTANDING THAT A PURPOSE OF THE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM IS TO PERMIT THE REDUCTION OF U. S. FORCES.

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" SENATOR PELL. THIS WAS A WORLDWIDE PROGRAM YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT NOT JUST KOREA?

" SECRETARY RICHARDSON. I AM TALKING ABOUT KOREA.

" SENATOR PELL. I AM SORRY, YOUR REFERENCE TO THE FIVE YEARS WAS TO KOREA, NOT TO THE WORLD.

" SECRETARY RICHARDSON. YES, ALTHOUGH I THINK IT WOULD BE FEASIBLE TO THINK IN TERMS OF A WITHDRAWAL, A TERMINATION OF GRANT ASSISTANCE OVER A FIVE- YEAR PERIOD. THERE WAS ANOTHER FIVE- YEAR REFERENCE, PERHAPS I MISUNDERSTOOD YOUR QUESTION, THERE WAS A FIVE YEAR REFERENCE IN THE BUZHARDT LETTER FROM WHICH THE CHAIRMAN QUOTED.

THAT HAD TO DO WITH THE GRADUAL ELIMINATION OF THE GRANT ASSISTANCE IN THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. THAT DID NOT REFER TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF U. S. FORCES WHICH, OF COURSE, IS IN THE FIRST INSTANCE AND TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT A POLITICAL AS WELL AS A MILITARY DECISION.

" SENATOR PELL. THANK YOU."

4. COMMENT FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.

5. OSD CONCURS. RUSH

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NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE092776
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DLRANARD/ DOD: PFLINT: DPW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730546/aaaajhq.tel
Line Count: 182
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 SEOUL 2993
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10-Jan-2002 by maustmc>; APPROVED <27 FEB 2002 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 980217
Subject: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY
TAGS: MARR, KS
To: SEOUL
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005